

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Saturday, November 22. 1707.

IN speaking of our Losses and Misfortunes, which however bad in themselves, some People are fond of magnifying, I am attack'd on every side with these Objections, some of which I have the Favour to have sent me in the following Epistle.

Mr. REVIEW,

YOU are for looking upon our Misfortunes, as the immediate Hand of Providence, and I agree with you in that—But does it follow, that there may not be evil Instruments, who by Negligence, Ignorance, or Treachery, betray us into these Mischiefs?—And does our looking up hinder our doing the Nation Justice on such as these?—What if on Examination it should be found, that any of our great Men, whose Posts qualify them for the Nation's Service or Destruction, have

sold their Country to the French, betray'd our Councils, and actually informed the Enemy of our Motions, &c. Are we to call this Providence, and let the Rogues go on to destroy us?

No, no, Gentlemen, not at all; if you take me so, you do as has often been your way with me, viz. Miss-take me, and that very much; I have not said one Word to encourage Knavery, or discourage detecting it—But I am against crying out Treason, and Rogues, and buying and selling the Nation, only to run this or that Man down, which a Party piques at, or which an underhand Gentlemen has a Mind to supplant and succeed in his Office; and I have seen so much of this in the World, and false, I see so much of it now, that I cannot refrain mentioning it—

Let

Let Knaves be detected, let Villains be expos'd, if but rational Ground of Suspicion can be had, let such be describ'd—But there is another Evil as bad in its Kind, and that is, blasting the Characters of innocent Men by groundless Suspicious, malicious Surmises, and sly Suggestions, only to lessen their Reputation, and render them suspected—This is Murther, and in some Degrees much worse than the less barbarous Method of cutting of Throats.

Now to look a little more narrowly into this Sort of Method, if you please to trace it, you will generally find, it begins at the Enemy; 'tis like them that first set the House on Fire, and then accuse the Master of the House, who perhaps was undone by it—And none so forward to cry out of the Crime, as they that love the Practice—Thus Judah readily condemn'd Tamar to be burnt for Whoredom, tho' he had done her the double Injury; first in with-holding her Husband, and next in being the Whoremaster himself.

Upon this Account I humbly propos'd, that in Accusations of this Nature the frivolous Accuser might be punish'd, as he deserves—But will any Man be so mad to say this suggests, that the well grounded Accusation should not be encourag'd—No, no—Bring them out, as Judah said of Tamar, and let them be burnt: But have a Care of the Staff and the Signet; have a Care that the Fraud does not lie in the Accusers, and the Villany cry'd out of be not fixt upon the Plaintiff—Two things therefore, I move, may be minded in our Misfortunes, and these are the chief Ends of my Discourse.

1. That they be not made the Tools of Party-Malice, to fix Prejudices in the Minds of the People against innocent Persons.

2. That they do not blind our Eyes from seeing GOD's Judgments, when fairly pointed by the Circumstances covering our Sight with the Mists of Personal Prejudice.

I must confess, I think there cannot be two greater Mischiefs befall a Nation; Alexander the Great never forgot the Death of Clitus his Friend, falsely accused to him, and who he put cruelly to Death in the Height of mistaken Jealousie; the World is full of Examples to illustrate this, and some in this Island, almost at the Heels of our Memory.

The Master-piece of Spanish Policy was shewn in Count Gondomar's clamouring R. James out of the Life of Sir Walter Raleigh, and thereby depriving him of the faithful Service of the greatest Man of that Age—Queen Elizabeth was hurried into her warm Treatment of the Earl of Essex, the bravest General, and greatest Swords-man of her Reign—The Parliament never made King Charles I. perfectly naked, till they obtain'd him to cut off his right Hand, the Earl of Strafford.

What shall I say to the late Reign, and how vilely King William was worried out of his Friends, in order to sell him to his Enemies! but I say no more, I am touching a Case so nice, that few People will bear the Reproof, however guilty: But I'll tell you a short Story, which is Matter of Fact; Two honest Fellows, their Passions and Politicks excepted, had a warm Discourse on this Head, not very privately neither; the Hearing of which was partly the Occasion of this Thought, and as near as I can repeat it, this was Part of their Dialogue, 'tis no Matter for Names.

A. asks B. what News? B. shakes his Head, very bad News, very bad News, indeed very bad News, have you not read the Prints?

A. No, prithee what is it?

B. Why our Admiral is lost. and two or three of the best Ships of the Navy.

A. Is that your News, you need not wonder at it, how could you expect any better?

B. Why Man, why not expect better?

A. Oh, our Fleet has always been under such Management. such Rogues; such Villains!

B. What are you talking of?

A. What am I talking of? Why the Fleet, I tell you, it has always been in the Hands of such Rogues, we have always been betray'd.

B. Prithee, what do you talk of betray'd, they are drowned?

A. Well, drowned, I warrant the French are not drown'd! I tell you, we are betray'd, bought and sold to the French; we shall never do well, till our Fleet is put into better Hands, and a few Rogues made Examples.

B. The Man's mad! I tell you, they were drowned, lost at Sea, no body could betray them to that.

A. Don't

A. Don't tell me, I say, they were betray'd then by their Pilots; from the Admirals down to the Pilots they are all Rogues.

B. What kind of Rogues do you talk of? what would they drown themselves?

A. No matter for that—Ay, why not drown themselves, did you never know Men hazard their Lives to be Vilains? They are all Rogues.

B. And what would you have done?

A. Done, turn them out, and hang a few of them, and put honest Men in their Rooms.

B. Who will you call honest Men? All the World will be Knaves in your S-nce.

A. I call them honest Men that beat the *French*.

B. I thought so—And they are all Rogues that do not, whether they can or no. Is it not so, Neighbour? —Good buy to ye.

Now, good People, pray observe, these are the Sort of Folks, and this the very Temper I am talking of. I do not say, there are no Mis-managements, no ill Measures taken in the Affair of Convoys, and let all such Errors be both rectify'd and resent'd—But 'tis the People that call every thing which does not succeed Mis-management, and will have Men in Office Rogues, because themselves have not the Opportunities to be so; these are the People I am talking of, and these have been the Head of our Complainers in all these latter Ages of the Revolution.

Thus it was in King *William's* Time, and this so'd the King to be ever shifting Hands, and changing Measures, than which nothing was more fatal to his Affairs; and nothing can be more fatal to a Government involv'd in Wars, and foreign Alliances, than to be ever committing their Councils and Measures to new Agents; but that is what I have no Business with, evil Agents of all sorts ought to be turn'd out, both out of the Service of their Country, and out of the Favour of their Prince—But all our Accusations ought to be grounded upon Matters of Fact, and no Man ought to blast the Reputation and Honour of his Neighbours with Suggestions and Surmises, as is our common Practice.

And now, Gentlemen Complainers, you that cry out of Rogues, and betraying us to the *French*, and the like, there is one thing more to be said to you—The Coffee-Houses, and Table Talk is full of these dark Charges, why do you not fill the Parliament with your Demonstrations? The Doors of Justice are open, the Nation's Representative is sitting, no Petitions will be rejected, no Accusations be thrown by, that are not frivolous and vexatious. Why do you not make out these things, while they may be heard?

Here Admirals, Generals, and all Sorts of Capital Knaves, of whom so much Out-cries are rais'd, may be brought to answer, and therefore here ought to end our phlegmatick Suggestions of Traytors, of betraying our Affairs, and Intelligence with *France*; for if you will not accuse them here, you ought not to accuse them elsewhere; Complaints here may be just, Complaints by Suggestion and Suspicion are meer Murther, Slander and Malice; no Man can complain of Mis-management, while the Doors of the Parliament are open to hear him, there let him tell his Tale, and there he will be heard.

All Matters of Complaint ought to be made to the Persons that can redress—I do confess, Time was, we had no Room for any thing but private Complaints, and crying out among our selves of *French* Councils, *French* Influence, *French* Bribes, and *French* Whores—And I doubt, we learnt the Habit of murmuring at Courts, and Instruments so in those Days, we will not easily leave it.

But methinks you should observe a little, how your Case is chang'd—You had then no other Relief: To complain then was fruitless, and either the Complaint or the Complainer was sure to be crush'd, and the latter perhaps ruin'd, if not worse; the Dangers of publick Spirits were then quite different to what they are now.

But as the Cause is remov'd, the Effect should cease; the Case is now quite alter'd.—You have had Losses at Sea, and Misfortunes abroad; Come, Gentlemen, name your Men, bring out your Accusation; if there has been Knavery, Treachery or Folly—Come away! The Parliament is sitting, the

QUEEN